

Chairwomen Osten and Walker, Ranking Members Berthel and Nuccio, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Katherine Tucker and I'm a resident of Danbury.

I am testifying today in opposition to Governor Lamont's proposed budget (H.B. 6659) and to express how disappointed I am to see that the governor's budget proposal does not demonstrate his support for the full funding of the ECS formula.

I had the opportunity to listen to some of the testimonies delivered by students, parents, and community members on February 3 during the joint public hearing on H.B. 5003. It was clear to me that if we want our students to be able to have successful careers and invest back into CT's economy, we need to ensure they have the funding and resources they need NOW while they're in the classroom.

Many businesses are having difficulties finding skilled applicants to fill over 100,000 unfilled positions, which can be directly attributed to the lack of knowledge and life skills students are able to learn while attending chronically underfunded schools. Additionally, it is estimated that if Connecticut doesn't fully support its students and address COVID-19 learning losses, current students will earn an average of 6.8% less over their lifetimes. This will have a tremendous impact on the State of Connecticut and could cost the state an estimated \$188.4 billion, or 2.3% of its GDP over the 21st century.

I find these predictions to be alarming and unacceptable. There is no excuse for the state to not prioritize funding our students' education. Fully funding the ECS formula will have a monumental impact in the lives of our students, and also the economic well-being of our entire state.

While Governor Lamont made the decision not to include fully funding ECS in his budget, I am urging you to prioritize fully funding the ECS formula by passing H.B. 5003. It's time to put students at the forefront of our state budget decisions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Katherine Tucker
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